



Staff photo/Scott Smith

The Rev. Catherine Cullen, pastor of the First Parish Church of Duxbury, talks about the significance of the Sabbath as a day of rest.

On and about Duxbury Bay

This is the 12th part in a continuing series about life on Duxbury Bay. This week take a look at the annual Duxbury Rural and Historical Society picnic on Clark's Island, which took place last Sunday.

By Scott Smith
MPG Newspapers

Puffy white fingers reached overhead, more decoration than shade as the summer sun glinted across the light chop. The *Peter S. Barker* motored 30 passengers across the bay at a leisurely pace, rounded Clark's Island's western shore and entered the sound between it and Saquish Neck. Cedarfield came into view, and the boat's skipper, a young lad with the Duxbury Bay Maritime School, coolly pulled the shuttle boat to the floating dock.

The passengers joined other picnickers already ashore, and more joined from the growing flotilla anchored in the sound. A Duxbury Yacht Club tender ferried the boats' skippers, who had deposited their guests at the dock then secured their boats in the flooding tide.

The Duxbury Rural and Historical Society owns Cedarfield, having accepted the house, barn and property as a gift from the Taylor family in 1971. The society has invited the public to its island home each summer to celebrate the first Pilgrim landing and religious service in Plymouth, which occurred on Clark's Island. (Clark's Island is now part of Duxbury, which became separate from Plymouth in

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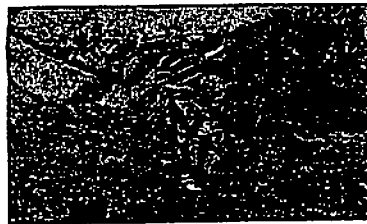
1637).

Cedarfield caretaker Peter Savage entertained guests with a narration of the trials of the Pilgrims who landed on Clark's Island on a dark and stormy night. The story goes like this.

In mid-December of 1620 a shallop sailed by 20 Pilgrims and *Mayflower* crewmembers sought shelter on the island from a raging storm after making their way along Saquish Neck by oar, having suffered both broken rudder and mast. The boat was carrying its passengers on an exploration mission to find Plymouth Harbor. John Clark, the *Mayflower's* first mate and chief navigator, had heard of the refuge during a trip to the Jamestown colony. For several days the men had sailed and explored along the Cape Cod coast. This night they unknowingly found their objective. (Thus the island's name.)

In the morning the rainy weather cleared, and the men dried their clothes in the late autumn sun on a giant rock they found on the island. They were so grateful for having survived their ordeal, and that day being the Sabbath, they elected to indeed make it a day of rest. During the day they held what can be remembered in history as the first Pilgrim service in their New World home.

"But though this had been a day and night of much trouble and danger unto them, yet God gave them a morning of comfort and refreshing (as usually He doth to His children) for the next day was a fair,



Staff photo/Scott Smith

Duxbury Rural and Historical Society director Patrick Browne presents a brief history of the Pilgrims' landing on Clark's Island.

sunshining day, and they found themselves to be on an island secure from the Indians, where they might dry their stuff, fix their pieces and rest themselves; and gave God thanks for His mercies in their manifold deliverances," wrote Pilgrim William Bradford in his history of settling the colony, published as "Of Plimouth Plantation 1620-1647." "And this being the last day of the week, they prepared there to keep the Sabbath."

The following day they explored the harbor in their repaired boat, found their ultimate destination at the mouth of Town Brook, in Plymouth, and discovered the rich soil they would need for crops at the bottom of the hill they would use for defense. They sailed back across Cape Cod Bay to the *Mayflower*, which lay anchored off what is now Provincetown Harbor, and returned with their ship and mates to launch their colony and new lives.

After guests enjoyed picnics in the shade of cedars surrounding century-old Cedarfield, Savage rang a bell to tell them it was time to walk along a path to the very place the Pilgrims worshipped, to the great rock named since as Pulpit Rock. There, historical society executive director Patrick Browne spoke of the history behind the annual event and introduced the Rev. Catherine Cullen, pastor of the First Parish Church of Duxbury, who was the event's guest presenter.

Cullen spoke of the significance of the Pilgrims embracing the Sabbath and said that was a lesson that society today could learn from.

"The first sacred act of the New World was to keep the Sabbath," she said from atop Pulpit Rock, surrounded on the rock by children and on the lawn by a hundred or more guests. "Have we lost that today?"

Se explained that in the Jewish tradition of the Sabbath, on the seventh day God rested, and He pronounced that as holy.

"Rest is holy," Cullen said. "It is part of the way life is meant to be."

She spoke of how society has lost the sense of the Sabbath as a day of



Staff photo/Scott Smith

Heading home — Visitors slowly make their way to their boats along the floating temporary dock set out for the annual Clark's Island picnic.



Staff photo/Scott Smith

Picnic lunch — The Plantation Drive gang take dessert during the Clark's Island picnic.



Staff photo/Scott Smith

Sermon — Several folks from throughout the South Shore and as far away as Ohio gathered at Pulpit Rock to hear the Rev. Catherine Cullen speak during the historical society's annual Clark's Island picnic.

rest, that the tradition behind it has become victim to working extraordinary hours, shopping, rushing and such.

"We need to stop and let our souls catch up with us," Cullen said.

The minister quoted a fellow

Unitarian, Henry David Thoreau, who visited Clark's Island during his walk from Concord to Cape Cod in the 19th Century. She said Thoreau wrote in "Walden" that our idleness is not subtracted from our lives but rather adds to it. She admonished the audience to con-



Staff photo/Scott Smith

Day trip — Duxburians Lana Gebhardt and Jim Taylor traveled to and from the island with about 30 others aboard a Duxbury Bay Maritime School shuttle boat.

sider re-establishing themselves with the concept of and reward of rest, including worshipping, thinking and spending time with family and friends.

"We need time to reflect, create, and let our souls catch up with us," she concluded.